

SAFE AND DRUG FREE SCHOOLS BACKGROUNDER

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Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources
Committee on Government Reform
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- The FY 2006 budget proposal submitted by the President would completely eliminate the largest of the Safe and Drug-Free programs, the State Grants program, after receiving \$441 million in FY05.
- While over half of the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in the country receive less than \$10,000 from this funding source, most of these districts have leveraged those dollars for additional community resources. These funds have contributed in part to the 17% drop in youth drug use over the past three years.
- The President's budget proposal justifies the cut to the State Grants portion of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program (SDFS) based on OMB's Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART). The PART review for the FY 2004 Budget rated the Safe and Drug-Free Schools State Grants program "ineffective," with the program receiving a score of zero in the category of program results.
- On December 16, 2004, Subcommittee staff met with Department of Education officials on this program, and warned them that the lack of performance data and ignorance of accomplishments of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program will endanger the program for future funding requests. Subcommittee staff asked them to begin preparing testimony for a spring hearing. On April 25, 2005, the Subcommittee was notified that the Department of Education would not testify the following day before the Subcommittee to defend the proposed cuts.
- Instead of eliminating the State Grants program, the subcommittee recommends that the Administration take steps to reform it. An example of an effective and accountable program is school-based drug testing. The President's Strategy Report and the Drug Budget Summary propose \$25.4 million for school-based drug testing programs for students. By addressing accountability, drug testing in schools has proven the single most effective drug-prevention program in the United States. By ensuring that the program funds drug use prevention programs that are focused and effective, the Administration can preserve one of our most important tools in the national drug strategy.
- On April 26, 2005, in testimony before the subcommittee, General Arthur Dean, Chairman and CEO of CADCA, expressed the importance of drug use prevention in the lives of our nation's youth. He warned that the elimination of the State Grants portion of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program (-\$441 million) would

have a detrimental effect on level of drug use and abuse among adolescents, and in turn, among adult citizens.¹

- In his testimony, Gen. Dean cited a 2003 study conducted by the NIAAA, which explained that addiction is a disorder developed in adolescence, for which effective prevention, through programs like Safe and Drug Free Schools, is crucial.²
- Unchecked drug use in our nation's schools has proven to devastate academic performance and achievement among students – America's future. A recent study by the University of Washington determined that students who avoided substance use scored an average of 45 points higher in reading tests, and 18 points higher in reading tests.³
- It has also been shown that youth who experiment with marijuana before age 14 are over five times more likely to abuse drugs in adulthood.⁴
- In a 1997 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, students who use alcohol or drugs were found five times more likely to drop out of school.⁵
- In testimony submitted for the record for the subcommittee hearing on April 26, 2005, Hope Taft, First Lady of Ohio, stated that Ohio's \$15.7 million Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities funding serves as the backbone of drug prevention. In addition, well over one million students have been the recipients of prevention efforts provided through the program.⁶
- According to First Lady Taft, "Without SDFSC funding, there will be no one in the school district to plan for the well being of children, no one to head up the Student Assistance Programs, no one to reach out for community services, no one to accept and properly use community volunteers or donations, no one to steer youth and their families to treatment centers, no one to help build resiliency in youth and help them navigate life's challenges, no one to focus on school connectedness, no one to counteract the pro-use messages that confront kids on

¹ April 26, 2005 testimony of General Arthur T. Dean U.S. Army, Retired, Chairman and CEO, Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America.

² NIAAA National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions, 2003.

³ Bence, M., Brandon, R., Lee, I., Tran, H. University of Washington. (2000). *Impact of peer substance use on middle school performance in Washington: Summary*. Washington Kids Count/University of WA: Seattle, WA. Available: http://www.hspc.org/wkc/special/pdf/peer_sub_091200.pdf.

⁴ Department on Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Science. (2003) *The 2002 National Household Survey on Drug Use*. Rockville, MD.

⁵ Lane, J., Gerstein, D., Huang, L., & Wright, D. (1998). *Risk and protective factors for adolescent drug use: Findings from the 1997 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse*. Available: <http://www.samhsa.gov/hhsurvey/hhsurvey.html>; Bray, J.W., Zarkin, G.A., Ringwalt, C., & Qi, J. (2000). *Health Economics*. "The relationship between marijuana initiation and dropping out of high school." 9(1), 9-18.

⁶ April 26, 2005 statement for the record submitted by Hope Taft, First Lady of Ohio.

every corner. Each school's continuous education plan will have a gaping hole where these funds and programs use to be."⁷

- The Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) Program has been very successful in Ohio, reaching at least 1,144,000 students in FY 2004 with the message of prevention. The Ohio Safe and Drug Free Schools program also meets the five behavioral indicators of effectiveness established by the U.S. Department of Education.⁸
- Data from student surveys reveal that Ohio's Safe and Drug Free Schools/Communities Program has contributed to:
 - An 11.7 % decrease in illicit drug use from 1998-2002.⁹
 - A 32.6 % decrease in alcohol use from 1998-2002.¹⁰
 - A steady decline in the percentage of students who reported carrying a weapon to school from 1993 to 2003, from 21.8% to 12.5%¹¹
 - An overall decline in the percentage of students who smoked cigarettes on one or more of the past 30 days between 1993 and 2003 , from 29.7% to 22.2%¹²

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Testimony of Bonnie Hedrick, Ph.D., Executive Director, Ohio Resource Network for Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities, before the subcommittee at the April 26, 2005 hearing entitled, ""Drug Prevention Programs and the Fiscal Year 2006 Drug Control Budget: Is the Federal Government Neglecting Illegal Drug Use Prevention?"

⁹ Ohio PRIDE Student Survey, 1998 and 2002.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ohio Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2003.

¹² Ibid.